

Lovecraftian inspirations from real life and beliefs

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Special thanks: Ken Austin

This brochure contains inspiration drawn from the beliefs of peoples who actually inhabit the Earth now or in the past or from facts taken straight from history or science. Each case includes the suggestion, how given beliefs or facts can be interpreted in the spirit of cosmic horror, emphasizing their appropriate elements, or bending them slightly. Sometimes, the descriptions are quite brief - a detailed discussion of each topic would take a lot of space and time. These are rather teasers intended to show why a specific thing may be interesting for fans of eldritch vibes and possibly encourage them to take a closer look at the topic.

The article is intended primarily for Game Masters who play games in systems inspired by Lovecraft's works, such as *Call of Cthulhu*, *Trail of Cthulhu* or *Delta Green*. However, I hope that other fans of cosmic horror will also find something for themselves here. The interesting facts presented here may also be interesting for people who are not familiar with the work of The Loner of Providence, but some of the references may be unclear to them.

For the record, whenever I capitalize the words "Mythos" or "Mythical," I mean the Cthulhu Mythology, not one of the many mythologies I refer to in this booklet.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GREEK MYTHOLOGY

Typhon – a classic but forgotten abomination

Zeus – embodied energy

In his house underground, dead Hades waits in sleep

Apollo – beautiful, deadly light

Hermes is the gate, Hermes is the key

Erysichton – slayer of living trees, eater of self

NORDIC MYTHOLOGY

A jotun is not the same as a giant, but it can be made into an abomination

Odyn = Nodens, Loki = Nyarlathotep

Or is Odin an abomination?

Einherjers and Odin the human

POLISH FOLKLORE AND LEGENDS

Jan Twardowski – the first man on the Moon

Silent night, starry night

Church in Trzęsacz – Deep ones do not leave their own, even after death

WESTERN EUROPEAN FOLKLORE

The Monstrous German Pied Piper

Ys – Deep Ones princess vs clan of eldritch saints

Jentilak and a Christmas cutthroat

Dragons come in every shape and size

TRUE (OK, SLIGHTLY FAR-FETCHED) HISTORY

Invasion of the Sea Peoples

Greater Germanic Antarctica

The emperor out of the time

The Indus civilization

Order of the Nine Angles – sometimes, reality is just as bad and mad as a horror

TRUE (SERIOUSLY) SCIENCE

Mad mathematicians

Humans like ants, ants like zombies

Halny and other foehn winds - the whisper of the wind brings madness

There is more to dimensions than dimensional shamblers

ABRAHAMIC BELIEFS

Covenant with God and Melchizedek

Succubi/incubi, aliens and a sorcerer-pope

Double faith

Stone from the sky, genies and angels

GREEK MYTHOLOGY

Typhon – a classic but forgotten abomination

Modern works drawing on Greek mythology usually make Hades (completely senseless) or Kronos (a little more) the Big Bad, but they forget about Zeus's greatest enemy – Typhon. After defeating the titans and then the giants, the Olympian gods had to face the main boss on the way to dominating the world – Typhon.

Here is an example of its description: *It was larger than the largest mountains, its head touched the stars. When he stretched out his hands, one reached the eastern ends of the world and the other reached the western ends. Instead of fingers, he had a hundred dragon heads. From the waist down, he had a tangle of vipers (yay, tentacles!) and wings at his shoulders. His eyes were shooting out flames.* (Hesiod, *Theogony*)

In other versions of the myth, Typhon was a flying, hundred-headed dragon. In any case – appearance and stature worthy of the Great Old One. Typhon attacked Olympus, and all the gods except Zeus fled in panic. The supreme god took up the fight... and lost it. Only in the second duel did he manage to defeat Typhon, but not kill him – he only imprisoned him, hitting him with a mountain which is known as Etna. And volcanic activity is the result of Typhon's anger, trying to break free.

Typhon equaled the lord of heaven not only in strength, but in fertility. His wife was Echidna, about whom Hesiod wrote: „*She also gave birth to another creature, invincible, huge, unlike neither men nor immortal gods, in a hollow cave – the divine violent Echidna, half a sharp-eyed young girl, with beautiful cheeks, half a huge snake, a great and powerful, spotted, cruel – in the depths of the holy land.*” This pair spawned many, if not most, of the monsters found in Greek mythology. Their offspring were very diverse and strange, as befits the spawn of enemies of the divine order, including:

- **Ladon**, the hundred-headed dragon who never slept and guarded the apples that gave immortality,
- **Cerberus** – we all know the dog guarding the gates of hell... but not all of us know that, according to some accounts, it had not three heads, but as many as 50, it was also covered with scales, and it had a snake for a tail... so what does this have to do with a dog?
- **Scylla** – this lady inherited the most from the human, beautiful part of Echidna... at least initially, but eventually, as a result of various perturbations, she turned from a beautiful nymph to something like her siblings, becoming a six-headed sea beast, so hideous, according to Homer, that even the gods could not stand sight of her – she dwelt in a cave, from where she opened her mouth to devour the crews of ships,
- **Gorgons** – I mean, those ladies with snake hair, not monstrous bulls. Medusa was one of them – the story that Athena turned her priestess into a monster as punishment for being raped by Poseidon is an invention of later poets,
- **Lernaean Hydra** – a multi-headed monster with many reptilian or human heads. In place of each severed head, two others grew, and in addition, the main head was completely immortal – therefore, after chopping off the mortal heads, Heracles had to burn the stumps and bury the immortal, still hissing head underground. Hydra's breath was poisonous,
- **various other creatures**, such as the Sphinx, the dog Ortkrus, the Nemean Lion or the Chimera. Each of these descendants has the potential to be portrayed as an Eldritch abomination in its own right. To be precise – according to some accounts, the father of these creatures (and Echidna

herself) wasn't Typhon, but a monstrous, ancient (older than Poseidon) sea god, Phorcys.

How to use Typhon? Well, Typhon clearly has the potential to be a Great Old One, imprisoned by... Nodens? Some other Elder God? Weak gods of humanity? Maybe his cult is trying to free him from Etna? What if he succeeds? What might distinguish Typhon from many other Great Old Ones? I would recommend focusing on his monster progenitor aspect – if he manages to reunite with Echidna, they will immediately start spawning various blasphemous beasts in series.

Zeus – embodied energy

In the current pop culture, Zeus is associated primarily as a mega-fucker, who will miss no woman. I propose to combine this aspect with his main role - the ruler of lightning - and create something more eldritch.

I propose Zeus as the embodiment of energy - all energy, and therefore not only electricity (lightning), but also life energy. Its influence is so strong that its mere presence causes women to become pregnant, giving birth to "heroes" characterized by great strength, aggression and psychopathic tendencies. It has been noticed that these heroes very often get into fights with the offspring of Typhon - perhaps this means that Zeus does not impregnate women by accident, it is part of his plan to cleanse the Earth of the offspring of his archenemy... Or maybe it is a coincidence.

Hera, the "jealous wife" of Zeus, who is known for persecuting his "mistresses" and offspring, is a being sent (by who or what?) to limit the Thunderer's breeding influence. However, while in his presence, she succumbed to his influence and gave birth to Zeus' spawn.

It happened once that Zeus' excess energy caused him to produce a new creature - Athena - without impregnating a mortal woman. She is the goddess of wisdom, and in the computer age we know that information is organized energy.

The myth of Semele is important here. Well, Semele, a demigoddess (daughter of Harmonia) became one of Zeus' lovers. Hera took the form of a mortal woman and persuaded Semele to test Zeus - if he really was a god, let him appear to her in his divine form. Zeus reluctantly granted Semele's wish, revealing himself as a thunderstorm. It turned out that even the demigoddess could not stand the true form of Zeus and she was burned to ashes, but her fetus - Dionysus - survived. Zeus placed the baby in his own body, where it matured. This story shows that Zeus isn't actually a muscular, bearded guy - he's just one of many forms he takes when dealing with mortals, like a bull or a golden shower.

In his house underground, dead Hades waits in sleep

According to records, Hades is the "brother" of Zeus. Sometimes he is even called "the other Zeus" to avoid saying his fearsome name. Instead of floating around the world, Hades rests deep in the bowels of the Earth. Instead of impregnating human women, the energy emanating from Hades has other effects. It gives the corpse a semblance of life. In the past, Hades' servants carried away corpses and left them around his "throne". Revenants are merely shadows of the people they were in life. Their feelings are muted, only chaotic fragments of memory swirling in their rotten brains.

The direct "management" of the underworld - if it can be called that - is handled by Minos,

Rhadamanthus and Aeacus. In life, they were half-human-half-divine hybrids, which allowed their reanimated corpses to retain slightly more consciousness. Most of the undead just wander aimlessly around the underground. However, every now and then Hades shows interest in one of them - unfortunately for him. Such animates are subjected to various grotesque experiments. They can be burned with fire, broken with a wheel... Sometimes the experiments take a more sophisticated form - for example, by trapping the creature in one place and leaving water and food just beyond its reach. Some people believe that in this way they punish the living who committed some terrible crimes and sins during their lives - but does god care about human morality? Perhaps the experiments are intended to test how much of human feelings, at least the most primitive ones, such as pain or desire, remain in animate creatures? But why?

There are also rumors that Hades kidnaps living people, especially young women (the source of the myth of Persephone). What does he do with them?

For some reason, Hades is sensitive to music, falls into a trance under its influence and is oblivious to his surroundings, to the point that he does not object even when someone tries to escape from his kingdom - of course, not every melody is effective (reference to myth of Orpheus and Eurydice).

The underworld is also a place of imprisonment for inhuman beings who, for some reason, the Olympian gods want to keep locked up - primarily the overthrown Titans, led by Kronos. It is possible that Hades' original role is to be their guardian. Interestingly, Hades made Cerberus, the spawn of Typhon, his servant.

The River Styx flows through the underground... Something more than a river. This stream of fluid is a sentient being, older than the Olympians - it was already here when Hades arrived. She is referred to as the "goddess of hatred" and emerges from beings full of aggression, which the ancients gave names such as Zelos, Nike, Bia, and Kratos. Supposedly, immersion in the waters (if they can be called waters) of the Styx made the immersed creature immune to all wounds (but at what cost?). Interestingly, there was actually a river on the Earth's surface called the Styx (now called Mavroneri, which means "Black Water" in Greek). Since ancient times, its waters have been considered dangerous, and modern science has confirmed that in the rocks of this river you can find a bacterium that produces a highly toxic substance, calicheamicin, causing DNA damage, with initial symptoms of weakness, fatigue and pain, followed by the collapse of internal organs and the nervous system. , ultimately leading to death.

How to use Hades and his kingdom in the scenario?

Maybe Hades fell asleep when the star of the Olympian gods dimmed... And now he woke up (does the revival of the Hellenic cult have something to do with it?). His servants kidnap the living and the dead to an underground kingdom, maybe the players' companion was kidnapped? Will the player be able to sneak into the underground, avoid meeting its inhabitants and free his friend? Such an expedition gives the opportunity to encounter "shadows" of famous people among the revenants (especially from Greek antiquity) - perhaps, if the characters have historical knowledge about them, they will be able to awaken their memories of human life for a moment and persuade them to help?

Maybe the players are part of an archaeological expedition to explore the newly discovered, yet unexplored ruins of an ancient Greek civilization... It turns out that those ruins are the entrance to the kingdom of Hades. Was the expedition leader unaware? Or maybe he deliberately led his companions to this spooky place? Maybe he is a follower of Hades, providing him with fresh bodies... Or maybe he wants to slip through and free the shadow of a loved one or dive into the Styx, and the companions are to distract Cerberus and other abominations? If players go to the underground kingdom, it is worth getting acquainted with musical magic, the legacy of Orpheus (and the interesting beliefs of the Orphic cult, which differ significantly from mainstream Greek mythology).

Hades may be connected to ghouls. They don't necessarily have to be his followers or subjects - maybe they pay tribute to him from some of the corpses? Maybe they are just aware of its existence? On the other hand, they may constitute a false lead - player characters familiar with the Mythos may assume that the corpses disappearing from the cemetery are definitely the work of ghouls, when this time they are innocent.

Apollo – beautiful, deadly light

Apollo is the most beautiful of the gods. He is a solar deity, called Phoibos 'The Shining One'. He is also a deity who brings epidemics using arrows from his bow. Interestingly, he was probably originally the god of violent death - the Greeks derived his name from ἀπόλλυμι (apóllymi) "I destroy, I kill" (the association with the biblical destructive Angel of the Abyss - Appolyon/Abaddon from the Apocalypse is appropriate).

So, we have a beautiful, luminous figure, bringing with it disease and destruction. My first thought? Radioactivity. There is a myth in which the satyr Marsyas challenges Apollo to a musical duel. When Marsyas loses, Apollo skins him - could this be a reflection of the skin peeling off the body as a result of radiation sickness? Ultimately, Apollo is the spawn of Zeus - but his energy manifests itself in a different way.

But Apollo also patronizes other domains - art (especially music) and oracles. Perhaps part of how his energy manifests itself to mortal senses is through vibrations that create beautiful, trance-inducing music? It may be tempting - to establish contact with Apollo, but only a little, to experience a creative revelation but avoid destruction... But whoever once looks at the beautiful light of Apollo and hears his music, cannot give up further contact with such magnificence...

Let's say - strange events occur in the city. Artists begin to create amazing works, while the predictions of local fortune tellers begin to come true. But each of the people affected by this miraculous inspiration is found dead after some time, with traces of radiation sickness...

Or maybe the characters decide that they need to momentarily summon a fragment of Apollo's power to gain the knowledge they need to complete the scenario? An avatar of Apollo can be summoned by playing music with vibrations similar to his own (as the unfortunate Marsyas discovered) or by inhaling the fumes of a special, intoxicating substance (as the deity's chief priestess, Pythia, did). Will the characters find the willpower to content themselves with obtaining the scraps of necessary knowledge and break off contact with the Shining One before it burns them out?

According to legends, the son of Apollo was Orpheus, the precursor of the Orphic sect, whose esoteric beliefs differed significantly from the "mainstream" we know from most studies of Greek mythology. One of its followers was Pythagoras (who was not only an outstanding mathematician, but also the founder of a religious group that believed that mathematics was the key to unlocking the secrets of the universe - here we have a typically Lovecraftian mixture of science and mysticism).

An actually existing object related to the cult of Apollo is the Omphalos, an ancient artifact in the shape of a semi-circular stone, which was considered the navel of the world by the ancient Greeks. It was the stone that Kronos swallowed (and then vomited) instead of Zeus. Later, Apollo buried the dragon Python he had killed under it, and Omphalos became the most important place in the Delphic sanctuary and was considered an object enabling direct contact with the gods. Although the sanctuary itself was destroyed, Omfalos survived and is now in the museum at Delphi (but, of course, it can be loaned to a museum located at the site of the action).

Hermes is the gate, Hermes is the key

Hermes is known as the messenger of the gods, which easily leads us to the Mask of Nyarlathotep, especially since Hermes is also a trickster, fond of playing practical jokes (and patronizing thieves and fraudsters), which may lead to further associations with the Crawling Chaos. But his role as a messenger was greatly expanded by believers and philosophers.

First of all, he became the patron of all kinds of travel and transport - even to the afterlife, as a psychopomp escorting souls to Hades. He is the patron of all roads and intersections.

Secondly - the messenger is a transmitter of knowledge. He was credited with the invention of numbers and letters. In later centuries, Hermes Trismegistos (Hermes the Thrice Great) was created by combining Hermes with Egyptian and Judeo-Christian beliefs. The term "Hermetic" comes from him, and it also became the center of the occult belief system called Hermeticism (note, contrary to what priests and preachers say - "occult" does not mean "Satanic"). Hermes Trismegistos was said to be an archetypal sage and magician, he was credited with authoring 36,529 books containing all the knowledge and wisdom of the ancient world - primarily the so-called *Tabula Smaragdina* and the *Corpus Hermeticum* treatises. Hermeticism combined astronomy/astrology, alchemy, medicine and psychology - that is, it was a mishmash of mystical superstitions and (proto)science - more or less like magic in Mythos (though, of course, the real possibilities of the Hermetists were much more modest). Interestingly, many Hermetic concepts, which at first glance sound like esoteric gibberish, have in a sense been revived in modern science. The Hermetists believed that matter was composed of four elements - fire, water, earth and air (sometimes a fifth "element" was added - will/soul/mind - symbolized by a pentagram). This meant that by changing the proportion of an element in a given substance, one material could be transformed into another - hence the search for a way to transmute lead into gold. As science developed, this concept was rejected as a pipe dream, treating the possibility of transmutation as a pipe dream... Until it turned out that yes, all matter consists of the same elements - electrons, neutrons and protons - so changing their configuration allows you to change the essence of the material. And modern chemists managed to transform it into gold: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_transmutation although such a procedure is unprofitable from an economic point of view (energy consumption significantly exceeds the value of the gold produced... but for a being with unlimited, from a human point of view, energy sources?). Concept of the four elements was somehow revived in the form of 4 elements (earth = solid state, water = liquid, air = gas, fire = plasma). Another Hermetic concept was "As above, so below." It sounds like mystical gibberish about the unity of man with the heavens, or sympathetic magic... But the development of science has led to the conclusion that in fact the microcosm is often an amazing reflection of the macrocosm - the structure of the atom resembles the structure of the solar system.

So, we have a being that, on the one hand, is omnipresent, embodies movement both in our world and between planes of existence, one could say that it is a key and a gate. At the same time, it is also a source of secret knowledge, which at first glance is philosophical, superstitious gibberish, but turns out to contain bits of science that go beyond the understanding of the people who possess it. Who else but Yog Sothoth? Well, possibly Hastur, patron of wizards and interstellar travel.

According to Greek mythology, Hermes was the father of Pan, a strange creature. The Pans had the body and face of a man, was all hairy, had goat legs, a tail, a beard and horns. Doesn't this description remind you of Yog-Sothoth's most famous spawn, Willubur Whateley? Of course, Willbur's lower half wasn't exactly goatish. The Pan's scream aroused incredible, irresistible fear

among people and animals (hence the word "panic). Pan used to play the syrinx - "the Pan's flute". One day, Pan fell in love with the nymph Syrinx. And she's not in it. Pan chased her and almost caught her, but Syrinx turned into a river reed. At that moment, the wind blew and a beautiful sound came from the reed blades. The Pan plucked the reeds and made an instrument from them, which he called a syrinx. A lovely story... What is the Mythical message of this legend? What if Pan was the spawn of Yog-Sothoth, and one of the incredible powers he inherited from his daddy was to make sounds that terrified earthly beings into maddening terror? And what if it was possible to construct a musical instrument that imitated this effect... and preferably made from the bones of a human woman who had previously been reduced to terror?

There is another interesting story related to Pan, told by Plutarch. According to him, Pan lived for 9,720 years. During the reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, sailors passing by the Echinad Islands heard a voice that ordered the helmsman named Thamus, after reaching land, to announce, according to this interpretation: "The Great Pan is dead." The sailors hesitated for a long time, and finally, reaching land near Palodes, they announced the death of the god. At these words, there were complaints and terrible groans from all sides.

Let me add that, according to some followers of the ancient Orphic cult, Pan was the creator of the earth, which he separated from the sea, and the individual elements of the Universe were equivalents of parts of Pan's body. Have they confused Pan, the offspring of Yog-Sothoth, with his father, who is "all in all"?

And of course, since we are talking about the Pan, we cannot fail to mention the book "The Great God Pan" by Arthur Machen, one of the precursors of cosmic horror, highly appreciated by Lovecraft.

Erysichton – slayer of living trees, eater of self

Tale of the Erysichton is one of the less popular myths. Erysichthon, king of Thesally, once took twenty men with him to the sacred grove of Demeter, where he cut down a black poplar tree where tree nymphs gathered around to dance; the tree groaned as he wounded it. Demeter, feeling the tree's discomfort at once, flew down to the grove taking a mortal woman's form, where she advised Erysichthon against cutting down the tree, warning him of Demeter's wrath. Erysichthon then rudely told her to leave, threatening to strike her down with his axe and saying he needed the tree to build an extension for his house where he could hold feasts. Demeter then resumed her divine form and promised revenge. She sent insatiable hunger to him, and no matter how much he ate and drank, he could never satisfy his hunger or his thirst. Even his parents refused to visit him, and he ended up wasting all his wealth for food. He also sold all of his belongings to gain money to buy food. In the end, he becomes a beggar living off the crumbs thrown at him by those passing by... and eventually, Erysichthon ate himself in hunger. Nothing of him remained the following morning.

Some version also mentions Mestra, Erysichton's daughter, who he sold into slavery. She was freed from slavery by her former lover Poseidon, who gave her the gift of shape-shifting into any creature at will to escape her bonds. Erysichthon used her shape-shifting ability to sell her numerous times to make money to feed himself.

So... Perhaps Erysichthon was intended to remove some strange, eldritch trees that grew as a result of extraterrestrial influences (Colour Out of Space?). He did not realize that in doing so he was releasing spores from inside the tree trunks that caused horror hunger in humans. Or maybe the groaning trees/"nymph" he was cutting down, was actually the Dark Young Ones ("Demeter" is obviously the face of the Shub-Niggurath). Coming into contact with eldritch being, he became a victim of mutation.

The next issue is Mestra. Hmm. Shapeshifting being, connected to the sea? Maybe Erysichthon's connection to Mythos went beyond fighting the Dark Young One? Maybe he was an agent of the Deep Ones - one of the favors he did them was to give up his own daughter in order to... Well, you know what the Deep Ones do to people. Defeating the Dark Young One was another task for the underwater bosses (maybe he was equipped by the Deep Ones with the right knowledge and weapons) - e.g. the Deep Ones needed a piece of the creature for some experiments and it was while taking a sample that Erysichthon got infected with the mutagen? Anyway, in exchange for his services, Erysichthon received a shoggoth from "Poseidon".

Let's say that strange trees appear again. Or that one of the characters, due to a close encounter with the Dark Young One, becomes infected with the same abomination as Erysichthon. Maybe the party will be able to understand that it is the same ailment that afflicted the king of Thessaly... And they will come across a note suggesting that before he performed autophagy, he was close to finding an antidote (e.g. by using secret knowledge obtained from the Deep Ones). But his laboratory, even after hundreds of years, is still guarded by the tireless "Mestra"...

In the process, characters may come across a false lead, falsely suggesting that Erysich**thon** has something to do with the Chtonians.

NORDIC MYTHOLOGY

Jotun is not the same as a giant, but you can turn it into an abomination

As is commonly known, the main enemies of the gods of Asgard are giants. As is commonly known, common knowledge is often wrong. Perhaps this concept is the result of the use of interpretatio graeca - Greek gods fought with giants, so it was decided that the Nordic ones should too. Perhaps this is the result of the fact that the progenitor of this race, Ymir, was actually a giant - after all, it was from his corpse that the gods created the world.

Nevertheless, a Jotun does not necessarily equal a giant. This is a very diverse group of creatures and while it includes individuals of enormous size, many of Jotuns are not different from humans in height. Among them we will find both beauties and hideous monsters. Their name probably comes from the Old Germanic "etunaz", which in turn was derived from "etanan", meaning "to eat" - and therefore their name could be translated as "devourers". Jotuns live on the outskirts of the world - sometimes in distant lands or in hard-to-reach places, such as mountain peaks.

Of course, in the Lovecraftian interpretation, the monstrous, inhuman aspects of the Jotuns should be exaggerated, and the situations in which they are portrayed too much like our species should be put down to image-distorting anthropomorphization (or maybe the legends have confused the Jotuns with their human cultists?).

Odyn = Nodens, Loki = Nyarlathotep

Many cosmic horror fans have a problem with Nodens, they see him as too human and too sympathetic to humans. But... if you think about it, why among the thousands of powerful beings inhabiting the universe, at least one wouldn't resemble humans? "Because it does not make sense!"? But Lovecraftian gods are, by definition, not bound by the human concept of meaning! Besides, I personally see Nodens as not so much sympathetic to humans, but hostile to beings that are dangerous to humans. In particular, it is about Nyarlathotep, who also pays attention to homo sapiens, but he likes to torment them and drive them crazy... So Nodens, while fighting Nyarlathotep, sometimes even unintentionally saves human worms from him.

And Odin fits such Nodens's interpretation. Odin fights against monsters that threaten people, and the basic motivation for all his actions is to prepare for the final battle of Ragnarok - but he is not so much interested in defending people as in defeating the monsters. Or at least inflict maximum losses on them before their final defeat. At the same time, the typical depiction of Odin largely coincides with the image of Nodens. And the ravens bringing news from the world to Odin is a vague memory of nightgaunts.

In a similar way, Loki fits the Mask of Nyarlathotep perfectly and not only because of the conflict with Odin-Nodens. He is known as a trickster and prankster (whose pranks often involve bloodshed) and a shapeshifter. At the same time, he is not one of the "human" gods of Asgard, but an adopted Jotun, i.e. a creature of chaos. Perhaps the stories that Loki was initially Odin's adopted relative and ally conceal the truth about the origins of the conflict between Nodens and Nyarlathotep. Strange eons ago, Nyarlathotep deceived Nodens, offering him aid in some esoteric, divine endeavor, and then betrayed him. Some gods feel no need for revenge at all... others, like Nodens-Odin, are so madly vengeful that their hatred can burn for millennia.

And Loki's strange, monstrous offspring - Fenrir, Jormurgand and other monsters - are some of the Million Favored Ones. By the way, I remind you that Loki is trapped underground, guarded by a large serpent - which means that this particular avatar of Nyarlathotep may have been sealed by Odin-Nodens.

Or is Odin and abomination?

You could also take a different interpretation. Odin is not Nodens. He is a separate abomination. Odin is depicted as a bearded man with one eye, riding an eight-legged horse. Perhaps behind this anthropomorphization there is a Great Old One with a cyclopic head, from which tentacles/twitches grow, and who moves on eight legs? Odin is the god of war and magic, the patron of berserkers and sorcerers, i.e. people who gain superhuman powers through madness. His name probably comes from the Old Germanic Wodanaz, translated as "lord of frenzy" or "leader of the possessed". The eleventh-century historian Adam of Bremen even wrote "*Wodan, id est furor*" - "*Odin is the madness.*" In addition to madness, Odin embodies the concept of power and knowledge gained through sacrifice (of one's own humanity?) - he himself gave one eye for it and hung dead for nine days on the "ash tree of worlds" (as the enigmatic poem Havamal, or the Word of the High One, puts it - "sacrificed himself to himself"). Odin was associated with the phenomenon of the Wild Hunt, hordes of ghostly horsemen galloping through the air and kidnapping innocents. The magical runes for which Odin is known could be actually hypergeometric signs used in over 3-dimensional technology, and the runes known to the Vikings are only faint reflections of them. Odin is known as a capricious god who often first shows mercy to warriors only to lead them to their destruction - in fact, he is not humanly "capricious", but his plans cannot be comprehended by human reason, and whether they bring help or destruction to people depends is usually a side effect. Interestingly, Tacitus identified the Germanic Wodan with Mercury. Wodan/Odin has little to do with the concept of a god of trade or a messenger of the gods, but as I have pointed out elsewhere, the figure of Hermes/Mercury has a much deeper, esoteric meaning.

Einherjers and Odin the human

In my opinion, the Nordic religion stands out from other beliefs primarily due to the concept of Ragnarok. One day there will be a final battle between the gods and their followers, and the Jotuns and other monsters (including the army of the undead brought by Hel, Loki's daughter)... which the gods are pre-destined to lose. Humanity and its gods will be destroyed, as will the world itself. And for me, this concept fits well into Lovecraft's concept of cosmicism - humanity and human gods (and the gods of Norse mythology are probably one of the most human deities - even more than the gods of the Greeks - in fact, they often resemble extremely powerful warriors/wizards, than transcendent beings) must sooner or later succumb to the forces of chaos and be consumed by them. However, there is a difference with Lovecraft's stance - instead of reacting with madness or depression, the people and gods of the North shrug their shoulders and say, "If that's how it's supposed to be, then so be it. But we will never come to terms with our fate, even if it is sealed. We will fight until the very end."

Odin was accompanied by Einherjers - the souls of fallen brave warriors. They spent most of their time in Valhalla, still training their fighting skills (and feasting with Odin in the evenings). From time to time, Heimdall, the guardian god, sent them to Midgard or Jotunheim to kill Jotuns - during such trips they were forbidden to speak to living humans.

I propose to transform the Einherjers into an organization/group of living people who focus on fighting Mythical beings, which they call "Jotuns" in the Nordic fashion. Perhaps they worship Odin as a god in one of the two versions described above (they may not realize that their god is an abomination as nasty as those they fight). Or maybe Odin was human? For example, Saxo Grammaticus and Snorri Sturluson in the 13th century described Odin as a man, a great leader who was considered a god. Maybe this leader encountered the threat of the Mythos and created a brotherhood of warriors to fight it?

The Einherjers are a secret organization (hence the element of the legend that it is forbidden to talk to living people). Initiation involves putting the novice into a state of clinical death, after waking up from which he becomes more sensitive to the invisible world and other dimensions - that is why in the legend the Einherjers are considered dead and hence the concept that Odin, in order to acquire secret knowledge, had to "himself "offer yourself" by hanging on a tree and his nickname "The Hanged Man" (suffocating is one of the "easier" ways of putting a person into a state of reversible half-death - of course, in real life I don't encourage anyone to try). Just as in the legends, the Valkyries (i.e. "Those who choose the fallen") roamed the battlefields, searching for the best and bravest warriors, so the members of the organization are looking for people suitable for recruitment - although nowadays they pay attention not only to combat abilities, but also academic skills. knowledge. Player characters can be Einherjers, members of the brotherhood can also appear as allies or sources of knowledge (not necessarily living - it is possible that they were wiped out, but their knowledge and arsenal survived) or opponents (they have good intentions, but their course of action may be contrary to the players' plans).

POLISH FOLKLORE AND LEGENDS

Jan Twardowski – the first man on the Moon

Jan (John) Twardowski, the hero of the legend, a Polish nobleman who allegedly sold his soul to the devil and became a sorcerer. Probably a historical figure, according to legend he lived in the 16th century and became famous for summoning the ghost of the deceased queen for King Sigismund Augustus. The ghost allegedly appeared in the mirror, which is still kept in the church in Węgrów.

According to legend, when the terms of the pact were fulfilled, devils came to kidnap Twardowski to hell. Interestingly, instead of taking the sorcerer's soul after death, the most material demons appeared and grabbed Twardowski in order to kidnap him bodily, alive... and instead of heading towards the underground, which in legends is considered the traditional place of residence of demons and damned souls, they began to carry him upward. At some point, Twardowski started singing religious songs, which caused the demons to escape, leaving him on the Moon, where he is said to have stayed ever since.

Could the "demons" actually be extraterrestrials? Maybe mi-go? Maybe Twardowski was their agent and obtained secret knowledge and technology from them that gave him the reputation of a sorcerer? As part of his studies, did he acquire knowledge of a system of sounds („religious songs”) that was able to drive away his masters when they decided that his usefulness on Earth had ended and it was time to transport him to a space base where he would be transformed into a brain in a jar? Or was transportation to the Moon part of the deal from the beginning? Oh, one more interesting fact – according to legends, Twardowski used to use a rooster as a horse, which he enlarged with his magic. It's easy to imagine an abomination that, in the eyes of laymen, might have resembled a large rooster...

Examples of scenario hooks:

– Twardowski's secret mirror is still in the church in Węgrów. The local priest thinks it is just some „pagan” superstitions, but in fact it is a tool enabling contact with cosmic beings and higher realities. It may prove useful to players if they convince the priest to let them take it – or if they simply steal it.

– Players are looking for Twardowski's notes to gain knowledge about the „song” he used to drive away mi-go (or other creatures that became the prototype of the „devils” from the legend). The so-called Twardowski's „School” or „Cathedral” was located in a quarry near Kraków. In fact, at the end of the 19th century, during the construction of the church of St. Józef, a cave showing traces of alchemical experiments was discovered... And it was destroyed. But perhaps there is a second, secret laboratory under the cave that escaped destruction? And there lie Twardowski's secrets... And again, potential obstacles may be placed by the local parish priest. But not only him. Maybe Twardowski's legendary „rooster” lies dormant in the laboratory and was left by the sorcerer as a guard?

– Players are astronauts on the Moon. However, it turns out that someone lives here, someone who was not detected by previous expeditions and probes. Will Twardowski prove to be an ally in the fight against cosmic horrors? Or maybe their agent, or an independent villain? If he survived this long on the Moon thanks to blasphemous secrets, it's possible that he had little humanity left...

Silent night, starry night

All over the world (or at least where Christianity or capitalism has spread) on Christmas, some fairy-tale character brings gifts to children. In the vast majority of places, it is Santa Claus. Poland is no exception here - or at least most of its territory. However, there are regions where a different character reigns - specifically in the Poznań region, the Lubusz region, Kujawy and Warmia (specifically in those parts of them that were under the Prussian partition), Kashubia and Kociewie, and the Bydgoszcz region. This giftgiver is known as Gwiazdor (which means "Starman", "Man of Stars").

Nowadays, very often his disguise looks identical to Santa's, leaving only the name as a distinguishing factor. But its traditional appearance is slightly different and quite specific. Traditionally the person portraying the Gwiazdor wears a mask or has his face smeared with soot (we warn Western readers - there is no reason to believe that it has anything to do with blackface, there is not the slightest suggestion that the Gwiazdor has anything to do with Africa). He is dressed in either a sheepskin coat or clothing made of tar. Sometimes he is accompanied by a female figure, called Gwiazdka ("Little Star") - she, in turn, traditionally has her face covered with a veil or simply a piece of cloth. Here is an example of two Gwiazdors with a Gwiazdka: https://nowytomysl.nowinylokalne.pl/media/2021/12/265281566_619400225848222_51152620723_9538148_n.jpg.

There are other star motifs in Polish Christmas rituals. In Poland, the most solemn day of the holidays is not December 25, but Christmas Eve, or specifically its evening. This day is popularly called "Gwiazdka" (yes, like the female character mentioned above). We sit down for the evening supper when the first visible star appears in the sky. In the old Polish tradition, it is the day when the veil of the worlds becomes thinner and ghosts appear among people. The tradition of the empty plate is related to this - in addition to the plates for each person participating in the feast, there should also be one additional plate on the table. In ancient pagan times, this plate was intended for deceased relatives. Later it became a symbol of waiting for loved ones who were sent to Siberia by the Russian occupiers. Nowadays, this tradition is translated as "a place for an unexpected guest" - in the sense that no one should be alone on Christmas Eve, so this plate is in case some strange, poor person from the street shows up at the door and you can invite him.

How to connect it all – together and with the Mythos? Who is the Gwiazdor? Well, its name obviously points us to a creature that came from the stars. Perhaps he is an avatar of Nyarlathotep - the giver of strange joys and the one who brings celestial wisdom? A version with a face covered in soot would fit here, which could be considered an imitation of the Black Man. Or maybe Hastur/Yellow King? The star wears a mask, something that is often an attribute of this creature. Sometimes he dresses in a sheepskins coat - Hastur is sometimes worshiped as the "god of shepherds" - and sometimes he dresses in straw (which is the simplest way in which poor old villagers could dress an "actor" in a yellow outfit). And if someone wants to throw in reindeer... Maybe it's actually a byakhee? And who is his veiled companion? I'll leave that to your imagination.

Let's say the children come across a book that describes how to summon the Gwiazdor. Of course, the stars must be right - so the summoning ritual should be performed on December 24, a moment after dusk, exactly when the first star appears in the sky... Perhaps the plate will play some role in this ritual? But if the ritual is successful, the children may see that the Gwiazdor... the unexpected guest... is very different from their fond imaginations. Like the gifts he brings with him.

Church in Trzęsacz – Deep ones do not leave their own, even after death

Trzęsacz (I suppose for Western readers the name itself is sufficiently Lovecraftian) is a settlement on the Polish coast. You can see the ruins of a Gothic church here, which make visitors aware of the great power of the sea waves. The church was built at the turn of the 16th and 15th centuries, about 2 kilometers from the sea. The sea gradually washed away the cliff coast, as a result of which in 1868 the edge of the cliff was already one meter from the building. In the mid-19th century, the temple had to be closed. In 1891, as a result of the action of sea waves, fragments of the foundation were revealed, a year later the northern and north-eastern walls collapsed. In the following years, the sea destroyed the north-west corner of the church, the facade, the eastern entrance, the chancel, the south-west corner, and a small piece of the western part of the south wall. Finally, local authorities took action to protect the remains of the church and prevent them from sliding onto the beach. A band was placed to prevent the destruction of the cliff, and then the foundations and structure were strengthened. A shoreline in the form of mesh baskets with stones was placed on the beach. The remains of the church still stand on the slope.

There is a legend associated with the process of destroying the church. Well, apparently a long time ago, local fishermen caught a sea goddess – Zielenica (meaning something like “Green female one”). The troubled simpletons reported this wonder to the local authority - the parish priest, who kept her locked up. Maybe he wanted to convert a pagan being to Christianity, or maybe he just didn't know what to do with this phenomenon? In any case, Zielenica soon died, apparently from longing, and was buried in the cemetery. Then her father - the Baltic Sea himself - started sending subsequent strong waves towards the holy place. Maybe he did it out of revenge against the parish priest and his religion? Or maybe he wanted to wash away from the land to recover his daughter's body? In any case, he achieved his goal by destroying most of the cemetery and temple.

Here the connection to the Mythos is obvious. Zielenica was a Deep One, and after her death, her kin used their water magic/technology. And again, what was their motivation? Revenge on primitive land inhabitants? The desire to provide Zielenica with a dignified burial at the bottom of the sea? But do the Deep Ones have such human motivations? Maybe it was pure pragmatism - the Entity's body cannot be buried in a cemetery not controlled by agents/hybrids, because what if some curious researcher exhumes it and obtains tangible evidence of the existence of undersea creatures? Or maybe the Zielenica was not such an ordinary Deep One and her corpse contained valuable genetic material that needed to be recovered?

To further strengthen the region's connection with the secrets of the sea depths, let us add that in the nearby town of Trzebiatów, there are quite specific sculptures of sea creatures. Here is a fragment of [a local bridge](#). Supposedly they are dolphins... But I don't think so, e.g. the finned ears on the back of the head don't match. [And here we see a sculpture on one of the tenement houses](#). This one is clearly associated with the Great Chtulhu himself...

The history of the region may simply be a clue to players that there are habitats of the Deep Ones nearby. Or maybe they will be thrown into the whirlwind of events? Maybe they can stop the Deep Ones from destroying the entire village... maybe just dig up Zielenica's body and throw it into the sea? Will the Chtulhu cult from a nearby town, cooperating with the Deep Ones, be a good lead?

WESTERN EUROPEAN FOLKLORE

The Monstrous German Pied Piper

Most of you probably heard tale about the Pied Piper of Hameln, who using his music lured out rats, which then drowned in the Weser. When, after the job was done, the rat-catcher was refused the promised payment for getting rid of the rodents, he led all the children of Hamelin into the unknown in a similar manner. What's really scary is that near Hamelin, a mass grave from the mid-14th century was discovered, containing several hundred skeletons of children. In fact, they probably fell victim to the plague, but still.

Music that puts living beings into a trance, during which they are ready to commit even mass suicide, sounds Lovecraftian enough on its own. What's more, this is not the only German legend about a wicked flute player. I present you "Der Flöter im Eulengiebel".

In the parish of Wewelsfleth lived a man named Swatkopf. He had a rooster which, after living in his house for seven years, laid an egg in the horse's manger. A strange creature crawled out of the egg, which remained in the horse's manger during the day, but as soon as it got dark, it flew up to the owl's gable in the house and played its flute. Swatkopf would have liked to sell his house, but he couldn't get rid of it; so he had it torn down and another built in its place. The creature then moved away from him to his neighbor Kasten Tumann, and in the evenings sat in his chimney like a lump of fire. When Tumann was at home, the flute player would always look in through the window and frighten him. Finally, Kasten Tumann took this so much to heart that he went out for the water and never came home. But then the animal was gone and was never seen again.

So, once again we have music played on the flute, which brings calamity, maybe even suicide. This time musician is obviously not human. He is born in strange circumstances that contradict the known laws of biology, and the narrative cannot describe him in any other way than "strange creature".

So... maybe there is connection between two legends? Maybe Pied Piper of Hameln was member of the same species, as the strange creature from Wewelsfleth? Or maybe even the same creature? Maybe it learnt how to masquerade as human being... Or maybe it was always openly monstrous, but unreliable memory of Hameln citizens changed him into a human? Maybe it was not actually playing a flute, but had some appendage which made madness driving sounds? And maybe he is still around? Or maybe another one was born by some another unfortunate rooster? Investigators would have to connect the dots resulting from local gossip and discover that they are dealing with creature of the old legends. Will plugging your ears protect against it? Or maybe its music affects the mind on a much deeper level, through some multidimensional vibrations, and a different kind of protection will be needed?

Ys – Deep Ones princess vs clan of eldritch saints

Ys is a mythical city on the coast of Brittany that was swallowed up by the ocean. Most versions of the legend place the city in the Baie de Douarnenez.

King Gradlon (according to some versions, married to sorceress Malgven, which dies in childbirth) ruled in Ys, a city built on land reclaimed from the sea, sometimes described as rich in commerce and the arts, with Gradlon's palace being made of marble, cedar and gold. In some versions, Gradlon built the city upon the request of his daughter Dahut who loved the sea. To protect Ys from inundation, a dike was built with a gate that was opened for ships during low tide. The one key that opened the gate was held by the king.

Most versions of the legend present Gradlon as a pious man, and his daughter, Princess Dahut, as

wayward. Dahut (sometimes called Ahez) is often presented as frivolous and an unrepentant sinner, or, sometimes, as a sorceress.

In most variations, Dahut acquires the key to the dikes from Gradlon, and its misuse leads to catastrophe. Commonly, Dahut steals the keys from her father while he sleeps, either to allow her lover inside for a banquet or after being persuaded to do so by her flattering lover. She opens the gates of the dikes, and the sea inundates the city, killing nearly everyone. A Saint (either St. Gwénnolé or St. Corentin) wakes the sleeping king and urges him to flee. The king mounts his horse and takes his daughter with him. As the water is about to overtake him, a voice calls out: "*Throw the demon thou carriest into the sea, if thou dost not desire to perish.*" He either throws Dahut off or she falls off. In some versions, after falling into the sea, Dahut becomes a mermaid who continues haunting the sea.

Some scholars have connected Gradlon to the Breton lai of *Graelent*, as far back as Kerdanet's edition of Albert Le Grand's *Vies des Saints*. The knight Graelent, reduced to poverty after angering the queen, meets a beautiful woman at a fountain and takes her as his mistress. She restores his wealth. However, he breaks his promise to her and tells others of her existence. When she leaves, he pursues her and nearly drowns trying to follow her across a river. She relents and takes him with her to her world, leaving his horse waiting on the bank. Once again, Gradlon is in love with the strange woman, with obvious connections to water and sorcery.

Ok, let's sum up. Good king Gradlon marries a sorceress, connected to the water, with inhuman name, and has a daughter, who is considered a sinner, sorceress, freak by the people. She „loves the sea”. She has „lover” on at whose instigation she causes the city to be flooded. Later some mysterious voice demands that Gradlon give Dahut to the sea, and the princess becomes a mermaid.

I see the obvious conclusion. Gradlon had the misfortune of marrying a Deep One hybrid, and the fruit of this union was another hybrid, Dahut. His wife died quite early, before her transformation began, which is why the king did not realize that he was having sex with a non-human. By the way, this wife, Malgven, is also character from the other Breton legend, and she is supposed to come “from the North”, but scholars agree that her name is neither Breton nor Scandinavian - its etymology is unknown, which is another reason to consider it not to have originated from any human nation. Also, Florian de Roy describes her with the words: “A water of enchantment shone in her eyes” - so once again, we have focus on her connections with some water “magic”. Obvious Deep One.

And Dahut obviously made contact with her sea-dwelling kin, which led to her involvement in the plan to flood Ys.

As I mentioned, in some tales, daughter of Gradlon is named called “Ahez” (probably from “alc'hwez” – key). Under such name appears in the Breton folktale *Kristof*. Kristof, the lazy son of a fisherman (or a FISHMAN?), catches a talking fish which allows him to wish for whatever he wants (or maybe he just makes a contact with literal talking fish – aka full-fledged Deep One?). Kristof travels to the city of Ys and uses his powers to uproot and ride an oak tree (thanks to the contact with the „talking fish”, son of fisherman/fishman can use extraordinary technology). When Princess Ahez mocks him, Kristof wishes that she would become pregnant; his wish comes true and she bears a son. With help from a druid, King Gradlon identifies Kristof as the baby's father. He puts Kristof, Ahez and the child into a wooden chest and sets them out to sea, but Kristof uses the fish's power to create an island and mansion far more wealthy than Gradlon's. Impressed, Gradlon offers to let the three of them return to Ys, but Kristof refuses and predicts that the city of Ys will be destroyed by the next high tide, due to the loss of the oak tree (so “oak tree” technological piece was crucial in protecting Ys from flooding by the Deep Ones – something an Elder Sign). Yes, there are some contradictions between two tales... but it is obvious that Kristof is the “lover” from the first one.

Oh, and saints which warned king Gradlon? St. Gwénnolé established new monastery, but place

where it was located, was so inhospitable that after three years, he miraculously opened a passage through the sea to found another abbey on the opposite bank of the Landévennec estuary. So someone who controls the sea... defeated the sea... defeated the Deep Ones? Someone who has will and knowledge to fight their machinations – no wonder, why he warned Graldon. Where did he get this knowledge from? Well, he was son of the st. Gwen the Three Breasted, which is folk Catholic patron of the fertility. And St. Gwénnolé is considered patron of fertility too, and one of the phallic saints (yep, they are thing in folk Catholicism) and had, well, priapic reputation. Oh, and he was not only one in his family who waged “war against the sea”. His father, prince Fragan, was known as a slayer of pirates. Brother of his grandmother, St. Teilo (yes, there are much more saints in this clan, including Gwénnolé siblings. What a pious family – or part of the plan to infiltrate the Church?) was known for defeating pirate Bwya (BTW his reliquary after his death was desecrated by other pirates – true enmity between him and people of the sea) and for defeating dragon/beast who he imprisoned by tying to a rock in the sea. In art he is shown raiding a stag (another connection to fertility?). And BTW, whole clan was related to the legendary King Arthur (this one), although it is not important part of this theory. So, Gwénnolé was member of the family known for the connection with fertility, unusual body parts and fighting people/monsters of the sea.. Maybe descendants of Shub-Niggurath spawn, who were waging war with Deep Ones?

And St. Corentin... He was master of Gwénnolé and bishop of the diocese of Quimper, designated by Gradlon. He was known for the possession of the magic fish – it had regenerative properties, so he can eat it infinitely. He is shown in the art with stylized fishbones :https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:St_Corentin_Banner.jpg and is patron of... seafood. So, maybe Corentin was experimenting on captured Deep Ones... maybe including eating parts of them to gain their powers? And – maybe one of the saints is the same person as the druid from the “Kristof” version?

So, obviously Baie de Douarnenez is good place for the eldritch exploration and will probably cause conflict with the Deep Ones. Would there secret diaries of the saints help investigators? Or maybe they will discover what was really the “oak tree”?

Jentilak and a Christmas cutthroat

The **jentil** (or **jentilak** with the Basque plural), are a race of giants in Basque mythology. This word meaning *gentile*, from Latin *gentilis*, was used to refer to pre-Christian civilizations and in particular to the builders of megalithic monuments. The *jentilak* were believed to once have been living alongside the Basque people. They were hairy and so tall that they could walk in the sea and throw rocks from one mountain to another and built great megaliths.

What's the fuss? Most cultures across the world have some versions of giants/hairy quasi-men. What makes jentilak special? They were supposedly quite advanced. They were said to have invented metallurgy and the saw and first grew wheat, teaching humans to farm. They disappeared into the earth under a dolmen in the Arratzaren valley in Navarra when a portentous luminous cloud – perhaps a star – appeared, said to have heralded the birth of Christ (*Kixmi*) and the end of the jentil age. Other stories say *jentilak* threw themselves from a mountain.

Ancient advanced race disappearing because stars are not right? Pure Lovecraft. Well, the fact that they were apparently afraid of the birth of Christ is not very Lovecraftian... But let's think. It is obvious, that in the time of Nazarene's birth, there was no public community of jentilak living in the Spain, province of the Roman Empire. Therefore, their exodus/mass suicide had to happen much earlier, and that luminous cloud/star was definitely some phenomenon more ancient than Star of Bethlehem.

Oh, wait. Actually, not all jentilak disappeared. One remained alive and on the surface - a certain

Olentzero. Nowadays, his function is mostly being Christmas giftgiver and he looks like... just like a normal guy:
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/c2/Olentzero_Hendaia_2006.JPG/500px-Olentzero_Hendaia_2006.JPG, not some hairy giant. In folklore he is often attributed to being overweight, having a huge appetite and thirst. There is song about him:

Olentzero big head

*robed in understanding
is said to have drunk last night
a wineskin of ten arrobas*

In original:

*Olentzero buru handia
entendimentuz jantzia
bart arratsean edan omen du
hamar arroako zahagia.*

Arroba is over 11 kg. Well, drinking so much wine is definitely an extraordinary feat.. But more interesting – and enigmatic - are epithets “big head” and “robed in understanding”, which suggest that he is something more than cheery drunkard.

Other song says:

*Our Olentzero
we can't sate him
he has eaten whole
ten piglets.
Ribs and pork loin
so many intestines
because Jesus is born
have mercy.*

On Christmas Eve, groups of people or children carry effigies of Olentzero around on a chair through the streets, singing Olentzero songs and collecting food or sweets (not unlike the American trick or treat). At the end, it is customary in some places to burn the Olentzero.

Interesting – looks like the unsatiable Olentzero is de facto worshipped... or placated with gifts (he is not bringer of gifts like most of Christmas characters – people symbolically give gifts to him – yes they are de facto eaten by by his little “priests”, but still). And after that, his effigy is burned. Strange thing, burning effigy of the supposedly nice, loveable character. It is like it is better to not have too much to deal with the Olentzero after placating him with sacrifices.

It is obvious, that some of the more gruesome elements were removed to make Olentzero more suitable for young children and to remove elements which were deemed too pagan. And some older customs make him even more sinister than his great hunger:

- in Areso children would be told to come home early. An adult would then dress up as Olentzero and scare the children still out on the streets with a sickle.
- in Uharte-Arakil he was traditionally suspended from a rope from a window, dressed in a straw mantle, in Lekunberri the effigy was attached to the chimney.
- in Berastegi if the children did not want to go to bed, a sickle would be thrown down the chimney and the children told that Olentzero would come to cut their throats if they did not go to bed.
- in Dima a straw puppet dressed as Olentzero with a sickle would be hung from the church tower after the midnight mass on Christmas Eve and if children had been behaving badly, people would say *Onontzaro begi-gorri txaminira da etorri, austen baldin badegu barua*,

orrek lepoa kendu guri "Olentzero with the red eyes has come to the chimney, if we break the fast, he will cut our throats" - referring to the traditional fast in the week before Christmas.

- in Larraun he was called *Ononzaro* and said to have three eyes and usually depicted as a drunkard dressed like a scarecrow. People would ask *Ononzaro begi-gorri, non arrapatu duk arrai ori?* (Olentzero of the red eyes, where did you catch that fish (i.e. inebriation)?) and the answer would be *Bart arratseko amaiketan Zurriolako arroketan* (last night at eleven in the rocks of Zurriola).

So... we have a character which is a member of quasi-human ancient race, which was more advanced than humans but was driven into hiding/suicide by some enigmatic stellar phenomenon. He is only one of them who lives on the surface – scout? agent? caretaker? watcher? He is characterized by great hunger and thirst and once in the year he is basically worshipped in the ritual, after which his effigy is burned. He is said to be “robed in understanding”. According to older traditions, he has three red eyes, catches fish (enemy of the Deep Ones?) and is associated with cutting throats of the people (especially children), with a sickle. It is obvious that under the facade of the nice Santa Claus expy, he is a monster. Ancient monster, relict of the advanced, pre-human race. He is always hungry and can't be fed by his own kind – they are dead/unable to live on the surface, their once great farms not exist anymore. For many years he was fed by the fearful peasants, lamenting that “Our Olentzero, we can't sate him, he has eaten whole ten piglets” and begging “because Jesus is born, have mercy” - *jentilak* are supposed to be defeated by the Christ's birth, why this one is immune and still bothering us?! At some point the villagers stopped feeding the Olentzero, only symbolic ritual remains. Maybe that's why he started cutting throats? Or maybe drinking human blood is what allows him to live on the surface? He is supposed to kill those who break the fast – maybe it is reminiscence of the old times, when people were supposed to eat less, to feed him?

And last thoughts... It is something which actually surprised me. Strange analogies between Olentzero and another, previously mentioned Christmas character, Gwiazdor. Gwiazdor means literally “Starman” or “Man of Stars”, Olentzero is only one of his kind who can walk under the stars after some enigmatic stellar phenomenon. Gwiazdor often wears straw – effigies of the Olentzero are made of straw or dressed in straw. Gwiazdor is accompanied by female character – Gwiazdka, and Olentzero has Mari Domingi. She was added as his companion in 1990s, to bring sex parity, but her origins are older. She is mentioned in the Christmas Carol in which she wants to go to Bethlehem, but some other people say, that he must change her old skirt first (is this some metaphor for the fact, that real Mari Domingi has to dress up specially if she wants to go among people?). Mari Domingi is described as a shepherdess and farmer, knowledgeable about the land and its secrets, the path of the sun and the phases of the moon, as well as the use of different medicinal plants. And before, Mari was the main goddess in the ancient Basque pagan mythology. She was supposed to live in caves (analogy to *jentilak*) and her departures from cave were accompanied by storms or droughts. She is said to feed "on the negation and affirmation" (whatever it means, it sounds at least as intriguing as “robed in understanding”). She was served by *sorginak* - “witches”, who are told to be builders of the local megaliths – just as *jentilak*.

Dragons come in every shape and size

Uh, a dragon. Is there more cliché monster? They are something high fantasy knights in shining armours fight, not subjects of the Lovecraftian investigations.

But, we should remember that before popculture standardized dragons as winged quadrupeds which breathes fire, this concept was much more complicated. Basically any slightly reptilian monster could be considered “a dragon” (that's why dinosaurs were not “mistaken for dragons” - they were

literally dragons), plenty of them quite bizarre. And many of them can be presented as mind-twisting eldritch abominations, who surprise player with their unusual qualities.

Herensuge is the name for a mythical seven-headed dragon in the Basque language. Well... the seven heads were believed to be actually the offspring of the Herensuge dragon. When the little dragons were fully grown, they would fall off their mother's body. It was so powerful, that no mortal could defeat it, only St. Michael Archangel, leader of the heavenly armies (face of Nodens?).

Basilisk. First known account about this reptilian monster comes from Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, written in roughly 79 AD.:

It is produced in the province of Cyrene, being not more than twelve fingers in length. It has a white spot on the head, strongly resembling a sort of a diadem. When it hisses, all the other serpents fly from it: and it does not advance its body, like the others, by a succession of folds, but moves along upright and erect upon the middle. It destroys all shrubs, not only by its contact, but those even that it has breathed upon; it burns up all the grass, too, and breaks the stones, so tremendous is its noxious influence. It was formerly a general belief that if a man on horseback killed one of these animals with a spear, the poison would run up the weapon and kill, not only the rider, but the horse, as well.

The name comes from the Greek form *basiliskos* (Greek: βασιλίσκος; Latin: *basiliscus*), which means "little king", "little prince", "chieftain", or "young ruler". Isidore of Seville defined the basilisk as the king of snakes because of its killing glare and poisonous breath.

There are two typical descriptions of the basilisks – original one, as the great serpent, who moves in atypical for snakes way. Sometimes basilisk are more bizarre – specimen, which according legend lived in Warsaw, was described as mix of the serpent and rooster.

Creature, which is causing destruction by its presence itself, its sight or breath, sounds quite Lovecraftian. But what type of being is basilisk actually through the eyes of Mythos? Maybe „the king of snakes” was effect on effort of the snakemen of Valusia to create new subtype of their species? Maybe it was supposed to be literal leader... Or just living weapon, „king” in the metaphorical sense as something leading the conquest. Or maybe it is an experiment of mi-gos? Or Elder Things? Or pet of the Xothians, for which it is harmless, and which they brought from the stars?

When characters identify monster as a basilisk, how to deal with it? Many tales say that it can't stand odor of the weasel. 17th-century Vilnius University historian Professor Adam Ignacy Naramowski wrote that it is possible to kill it with boughs of rue. And according to the legend, Warsawian basilisk was killed by a man who reflected its deadly sight with mirror (maybe it is form of some light waves, invisible to human eye?). And if You think that defeating a monster with such things is un-Lovecraftian, I remind You that Miskatonic scientists managed to kill son of the Yog-Sothoth himself, by the magic powder they made themselves. But of course, all those methods can turn out silly superstitions, which will put the basilisk-fighting characters in an awkward (and probably lethal) position.

Tatzelwurm. In the folklore of the Alpine region of south-central Europe, the *Tatzelwurm* *Stollenwurm*, or *Stollwurm* ("tunnel worm" or "dragon of the mine-tunnels") is a lizard-like creature, often described as having the face similar to a cat, with a serpent-like body which may be slender or stubby, with four short legs or two forelegs and no hindlegs. The *Tatzelwurm* of Austria and Bavaria is described as having poison breath, said even to be lethal. The *Stollenwurm* also has been characterized as poisonous in Swiss lore. Its origins can be similar as the basilisk, with the addition of potential connection to Chtonians.

A TRUE (OK, SLIGHTLY FAR-FETCHED) HISTORY

Invasion of the Sea Peoples

Ancient, super-advanced, fallen civilizations are one of the favorite motifs of fantasy. And truth be told, something similar happened in real history. Of course, in reality, the fallen civilizations did not have sci-fi supertechnology at their disposal, but their collapse still led to great destabilization. We are talking about the invasion of the so-called Sea Peoples, which took place at the turn of the 13th and 12th centuries BC. The Sea Peoples were mobile and warlike groups of people of unknown origin. They caused the collapse of several advanced cultures, including: Mycenaean and Hittite. Only the Egyptians managed to defeat them in a great battle. Well, the material for Lovecraftian inspiration is obvious. A mysterious army, coming out of nowhere, called the „Sea Peoples”, leading to the fall of the most powerful human civilizations at that time? Let us add that, according to some historians, the descendants of the Sea Peoples destroyed by the Egyptians were the Philistines. Yes, the same Philistines, one of whose main deities was the well-known Dagon to Lovecraftomaniacs... Deep Ones say hello. Let us also add that, according to Egyptian records, the tribes of the Sea Peoples had names such as Ekvesh, Teresh, Lucki, Sherden, Shekelesh, Tekel and Peleset. Sounds suitably dark, blasphemous and filthy? If we want to dig deeper, one of the pharaohs who ruled Egypt was Akhenaten – yes, that heretic who tried to replace the worship of traditional Egyptian gods with the religion of the Aten and who is very much liked by conspiracy theorists. Let's add to the mix that Middle Eastern cultures had quite a negative attitude towards the sea as such. Babylonian Marduk had to defeat the giant monsters of Chaos – Apsu and Tiamat, personifications of fresh and salt waters, respectively. The Bible also contains traces of the myth about the fight between Yahweh and Leviathan, and the Book of Revelation, describing the new, ideal world, emphasizes that „I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.”

Let's assume that the players are researchers of an antiquity – historians, archaeologists, etc. They conduct research on the Sea Peoples. Of course, as common sense dictates, they assume that these were human warriors. However, as time goes on, more and more evidence appears that they were not completely human again, and the evidence of their monstrosity becomes increasingly difficult to put down to the demonization that Egyptian chroniclers used against their enemies... It becomes clear that an onslaught of inhuman and semi-human monsters came from the sea. , trying to conquer the world of that time. Moreover, after their defeat at the hands of the Egyptians, this species did not become extinct, but instead of open conquest it switched to cautious infiltration. Perhaps the Deep Ones have spies in academia who are tasked with eliminating historians who find the trail of truth...

Oh, one more interesting fact connecting the history of the Sea Peoples with Lovecraft. Well, as we know, HPL liked to use the term „Cyclopean” for huge, monumental buildings. At least he didn't come up with it himself. Well, when the later (and at first more primitive) inhabitants, the Dorians, saw the ruins of destroyed castles left by the Mycenaean culture, they came to the conclusion that such huge buildings could not have been built by human hands, so they were probably the work of mythical giants – cyclopes.

Greater Germanic Antarctica

The concept of "Nazi remnants surviving in a secret base on the Moon/in the middle of a hollow Earth/in Antarctica" is one popular conspiracy theory. At least this last option makes at least a bit of sense. Let us add that Antarctica is a great setting for horror films - starting from "At the Mountains of Madness", through the movie "The Thing" and the recent series "Terror". But... let's go back to

the real world for a moment.

In 1939, the Third German Antarctic Expedition under the command of Captain Alfred Ritscher set off with the aim of establishing a whaling base in the Antarctic region of New Swabia, which was claimed by the Third Reich. The Germans planted flags, took photos, and that was the end of their activity. Interestingly, after the war, Ritscher was not arrested, but he became the chairman of the organization "Society for the Promotion of the Archives of Polar Research" and planned another (unsuccessful) expedition.

Then, in 1946-1947, the Americans carried out Operation Highjump (another codename - "Task Force 68") in Antarctica. Interestingly, it was a US Navy military operation and a large one (4,700 people, 70 ships, 33 planes). The organizer was Admiral Richard E. Byrd, and the immediate commander was Rear Admiral Ethan Erik Larson. The expedition began tragically - almost at the very beginning, the George-1 bomber crashed on Thurston Island, killing 3 crew members. Some time after the end of the operation, Admiral Byrd gave an interview - I quote a fragment of the publication: "The fantastic speed with which the world is shrinking - recalled the admiral - is one of the most important lessons learned during his recent Antarctic exploration. "I have to warn my compatriots that the time has ended when we were able to take refuge in our isolation and rely on the certainty that the distances, the oceans, and the poles were a guarantee of safety." Of course, the admiral had in mind the threat from the Soviets... But it can easily be read as a reflection related to the awareness that the world controlled by humans is tiny and that a threat that could crush even a power such as the USA may come at any time from the least expected direction.

Could it be that in 1939 the Germans, while exploring the whaling potential of Antarctica, came across leviathans much larger and older than the ordinary cetaceans? Is that why the Third Expedition abandoned plans to establish a base in Antarctica, believing that some matters were better left untouched? Or did she set up a secret base? Why did Hitler surprisingly appoint Admiral Karl Dönitz, a submarine specialist, as his successor before his suicide - did he believe that the deep sea held the key to saving the Reich (or at least taking revenge on the victorious Allies)? Why was the post-war Operation Highjump led by the military and heavily armed, and who did the Americans want to fight against, white bears? Was Ritscher involved in Nazi occult activities and wanted to return to Antarctica after the war to dig up its secrets? Or, on the contrary, was he an ordinary man involved in the activities of the German fleet, who accidentally came across an ancient horror and years later wanted to make sure that it would no longer threaten humanity? Players can take on the role of both Operation Highjump participants and independent researchers who find a trace of a threat that the soldiers from Task Force 68 failed to completely remove.

The emperor out of the time

Caligula is one of the most famous Roman emperors - definitely on the bad side. He even became a synonym for a degenerate tyrant. Few people know, however, that the first period of his rule went down quite well in history. Well, the young emperor began to implement positive reforms - he ordered the discontinuation of all political trials, pardoned people exiled for political reasons, and ordered the publication of works by former opposition historians that were banned during the rule of his predecessor. He introduced tax breaks and resumed publishing state accounts. Unfortunately, in November 41, he fell seriously ill. All of Rome prayed for the recovery of the widely loved leader.

Unfortunately, when Caligula got out of bed, he was a completely different person (?). From a reformer he became a tyrant. He began murdering political opponents and confiscating their properties. He also gained a reputation as a debauchee, organizing public orgies. He began to issue

strange orders - which he carried out regardless of costs, technical possibilities and public opinion. He ordered mountains to be built on plains, and vice versa: to level hills and mountain slopes. He built dams in places where the sea was - in his opinion - too stormy. He ordered, among other things, build a long wooden bridge from the Palatine Hill through the Forum to the Capitoline Hill just to be able to quickly get to the temple of Capitoline Jupiter. Another whim of Caligula was to declare war on the sea god, Neptune. He ordered his soldiers to go to the beach and stab the sea and the waves with swords and throw spears at them. Then, on the orders of the ruler, the legionnaires began to collect shells, which were proclaimed war spoils and transported to the Capitol.

So we have a person who falls seriously ill and then wakes up with a completely changed character and eccentric behavior. Isn't this Yithian's *modus operandi*? The tyrannical behavior of the transformed Caligula can be explained by the fact that, as a representative of the Great Race, he did not understand human customs. Orgies? A study of the sexual habits of *homo sapiens* (plus maybe the Yithian assumed that *homo sapiens* were obsessed with sex, so maybe orgies would be a good way to control them). Weird orders to transform terrain? People couldn't understand them, but the Yithian had a purpose. Perhaps they served to secure the prisons of flying polyps and other enemies of the Great Race? Or maybe, according to millennia-long plans, they were supposed to somehow support Yithian's construction plans in the future? And the "war with Neptune"? Every Yithian is an explorer. The one who switched minds with Caligula wanted to examine the shells washed up on the beach, knowing that they bore signs of mutations caused by the Deep Ones living nearby. First, he ordered the legionnaires to make a show of force so that the Deep Ones would not interfere with the collection of evidence, and then he would requisition the specimens.

Caligula's "madness" led to a rebellion and his assassination, so the Yithian did not complete his mission and the emperor's true mind never returned to his body.

How to use this concept? Well, of course, the easiest way to do it is to play Cthulhu Invictus, an expansion to Call of Cthulhu set in ancient Rome. But it can also be used later. Maybe players come across another Yithian who is carrying out construction work in places that strangely coincide with those where Caligula carried out his crazy projects? Perhaps the story of the "war with Neptune" is a clue to the location of the ancient abodes of the Deep Ones? Maybe "Caligula" left behind a design for some advanced machine that he didn't have time to build, and the document is currently in the Vatican Archives?

The Indus civilization

As I mentioned in the passage about the Sea Peoples, there is a grain of truth in the stories about ancient, advanced civilizations. One of the best examples (and at the same time unrelated to the Sea Peoples, therefore deserving its own section) is the Indus Civilization. This civilization developed in the period from 3300 to 1300 BC. leaving behind cities, the most famous of which are Harappa and Mohenjo Daro. Of course, it did not reach our modern technological level, but its successes were still astonishing. Their irrigation and sewage system was wonderful. They also had advanced scales and measuring instruments. Interestingly, their cities lack any buildings that could be considered palaces, temples or any other seats of power - and at the same time, the clearly ordered structure of buildings indicates a conscious urban plan. Their religion is unknown, although the motif of horned beasts is often repeated in art. Their letter was also not read. The reason for the collapse of such an advanced civilization is unknown - it does not appear that they waged any wars, and even the city walls probably served more as flood embankments than defensive fortifications. All this makes the Indus civilization a perfect place to locate the forgotten secrets of the ancient world, and much more rooted in reality than, for example, Atlantis.

By the way, RPG enthusiasts may also be interested in the fact that the Indus civilization knew d6 dice.

Order of the Nine Angles – sometimes, reality is just as bad and mad as a horror

Academics have found it difficult to ascertain "exact and verifiable information" about the ONA's origins given the high level of secrecy it maintains. As with many other occult organisations, the Order shrouds its history in "mystery and legend", creating a "mythical narrative" for its origins and development. The ONA claims to be the descendant of pre-Christian pagan traditions which survived the Christianisation of Britain and were passed down from the Middle Ages onward in small groups or "temples" which were based in the Welsh Marches – a border area which is located between England and Wales – each of which was led by a grand master or a grand mistress. Sounds like another New Age pagan group? Well, ONA members consider themselves „traditional satanists“. And they are not Laveyan Satanists, aka atheists who like edgy, dark vibes.

The ONA believe that humans live within the *causal* realm, which obeys the laws of cause and effect. They also believe in an *acausal* realm, in which the laws of physics do not apply, further promoting the idea that numinous energies from the acausal realm can be drawn into the causal, allowing for the performance of magic. The Order promotes the idea that "Dark Gods" exist within the acausal realm, although it is accepted that some members will interpret them not as real entities but as facets of the human subconscious. These entities are perceived as dangerous, with the ONA advising caution when interacting with them. Among those Dark Gods whose identities have been discussed in the Order's publicly available material are a goddess named Baphomet who is depicted as a mature woman carrying a severed head. Another of these acausal figures is termed Vindex, after the Latin word for "avenger". The ONA believe that Vindex will eventually incarnate as a human – although the sex and ethnicity of this individual is unknown – through the successful "presencing" of acausal energies within the causal realm, and that they will act as a messianic figure by overthrowing the current forces and leading the ONA to prominence in the establishment of a new society. Nyarlathothep?

The ONA arose to public attention in the early 1980s. During the 1980s and 1990s, it spread its message through articles in magazines. In 1988, it began publication of its own in-house journal, titled *Fenrir*. Among material it has issued for public consumption have been philosophical tracts, ritual instruction, letters, poetry, and gothic fiction. Its core ritual text is titled the *Black Book of Satan*. It has also issued its own music, painted tarot set known as the Sinister Tarot, and a three-dimensional board game known as the Star Game

The group largely consists of autonomous cells known as "nexions". The original cell, based in Shropshire, is known as "Nexion Zero", with the majority of subsequent groups having been established in Britain, Ireland, and Germany. Nexions and other associated groups have been established in the United States, Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Serbia, Russia and South Africa.

The Satanism, the ONA assert, requires venturing into the realm of the forbidden and illegal in order to shake the practitioner loose of cultural and political conditioning. It should undermine society and establish its own „Imperium“. ONA texts such as "The Dreccian Way", "Iron Gates", "Bluebird" and "The Rape Anthology" recommend and praise rape and pedophilia, even suggesting rape is necessary for "ascension of the Ubermensch". And all of this is not some posturing by wannabe villains „huhu, we are so evil!!!“. The FBI officially considers ONA nexion 764 and its offshoots terrorist organizations. According to *Global Project Against Hate and Extremism*, "[764] operates within the framework of the broader ONA, which advocates the destruction of society through criminal acts such as violence, sexual assault, murder, and terrorism [and] is implicated in a network of online cults that exploit and groom children." <https://www.theguardian.com/us->

[news/2023/sep/28/new-york-satanic-cult-764-fbi](https://www.fox6now.com/news/wisconsin-teen-homicides-plot-assassinate-trump) As of November 2023 Finnish police was investigating at least three terrorism cases connected to ONA. Russian Sergey Chulkov ("Nosferatu") allegedly raped a 14-year-old girl — several times in his car, then in an apartment on Moscow Zavodskaya Street. Chulkov is a member of a Russian nexion according to the police, was arrested with ONA literature and was tattooed with satanic occult symbols. In December 2024, a high school student in [Guadalajara, Mexico](#) broadcasted himself attacking his classmates with an axe. His social media posts showed his allegiance to the Order of Nine Angles, including blood pacts. 23-year-old Hugo Figuerola, member of the ONA, was arrested in late February 2025 in Spain for threatening a mass shooting and bombing in Valencia. A Wisconsin teen is alleged to have killed his father and mother on February 11, 2025 and planned to assassinate Donald Trump to "save the white race" and start a revolution. The teen was also in possession of ONA material and identified himself as a member of ONA. <https://www.fox6now.com/news/wisconsin-teen-homicides-plot-assassinate-trump>

So, when You are watching a horror about some satanic evil global conspiracy, and someone says „actually, real life Satanists are not like that”, You can answer „actually, some of Satanists are exactly like that”.

ONA members describe themselves as Satanists, but their core concept – existence of the acausal reality, which denies established rules of logic and science and bizarre „Dark Gods” which are connected to it and which are dangerous to be contacted, makes them potential antagonist in the Lovecraftian story as an eldritch cult, just using „Satan” as name recognizable in the culture (well, is Satan not just one of the faces of Nyarlathotep?). And their behaviour sounds very similar to the credo of the cult of Cthulhu: „Then the liberated Old Ones would teach them new ways to shout and kill and revel and enjoy themselves, and all the earth would flame with a holocaust of ecstasy and freedom”. Want to give Your players real chill? What about making their characters fighting ONA, and when they will go home and do the search on Internet, be shocked by the revelation that those mad degenerates actually exist and are just as evil as those in the game?

If you like what you read at least a little, please check out my other materials, such as:

- „[Twisted Gods](#)” - an article containing suggestions for new deities and religions invented by me - each contains a plot twist that can be used in the scenarios.

- „**Skeletons of the Gods**” - a dark fantasy/horror story about a man who was willing to do anything to become someone (or something) more than he was – [audio](#) and [text](#).

- „[Dominion of Darkness](#)” - a cRPG/text strategy game in which you take on the role of a Dark Lord/Lady and strive to conquer or destroy the world using intrigue, black magic or brute force.

TRUE (SERIOUSLY) SCIENCE

Mad mathematicians

Mathematics is a language that describes reality and the universe. And since the nature of reality is shocking in cosmic horror, the logical conclusion is that studying it can lead to madness. The motif „magic, if it works, is really mathematics and physics, the understanding of which exceeds the human mind” appears in Lovecraft, for example in „Dreams in the Witch House”. This usually works on the principle that the Necromicon and other „books of magic” contain scraps of advanced knowledge obtained from inhuman beings, which superstitious sorcerers then treat as magic. Therefore, it should also work the other way round – a professional scientist should be able to discover dirty and blasphemous secrets through scientific research. Here are some viable candidates for „scholars who looked into the abyss, and the abyss looked into them.”

Kurt Gödel (1906-1978) – Austrian-American mathematician, physicist and philosopher. He dealt with, among others, theory of relativity (which in itself negates the image of the world that „common sense” dictates to us), deriving from it equations intended to prove the possibility of time travel. Towards the end of his life he went crazy, among other things, believing someone was trying to poison him. When his wife was hospitalized for a long time and was unable to taste his meals to prove the lack of poison, Gödel starved himself to death.

Georg Cantor (1845-1918) – German mathematician, creator of set theory. Over time, he delved deeper into mysticism and claimed that mathematics could be used to reach conclusions about metaphysics. Some Christian (Cantor himself considered himself a devout Christian) philosophers of his time claimed that Cantor’s mathematical theories were contrary to religious dogmas (it was something about proving the existence of an infinite being, other than God – I am not a mathematician, I don’t really understand what is going on). Cantor was tormented by bouts of depression, sometimes so severe that they led to hospitalization.

Ludwig Boltzmann (1844-1906) – Austrian physicist, pioneer of the kinetic theory of gases. He theorized the “Boltzmann brain” – a hypothetical self-aware entity that emerges from chaos through random fluctuations. Boltzmann proposed that we and our observed low-entropy world arose from a random fluctuation in a higher-entropy universe. He committed suicide by hanging. *„If our current level of organization, having many self-aware entities, is the result of random fluctuation, and it is much less likely to be so than a level of organization that produces only self-aware self-aware entities, then in any universe with the level of organization we see, there should be a huge number of solitary Boltzmann brains floating in unrecognized environments. In an infinite universe, the number of self-aware brains spontaneously, randomly emerging from chaos, along with false memories of life like ours, should far outweigh the number of real brains evolved in the observable universe, arising from unimaginably rare fluctuations”*. Did I understand it? Not really, but it sounds quite Lovecraftian – self-aware beings emerging from chaos, our world as a result of random processes taking place in the „higher” universe... it’s easy to spin a cosmic horror out of it. And let’s theorize that Boltzmann’s suicide was due to the terrifying conclusions he had reached...

Paul Ehrenfest (1880-1930) – Austrian-Dutch physicist. He researched the theory of relativity (which, as I mentioned, very often leads to „crazy” conclusions about the nature of reality) and laid the foundations for quantum physics (which is even crazier). Towards the end of his life, he fell into severe depression and shot first his son and then himself.

Grigory Perelman (1966) – the only still living member of this group, a Russian mathematician. He had a brilliant career in Russia and the USA. His greatest achievement was presenting evidence for the so-called Poincaré’s hypothesis regarding the shape of the universe. Unexpectedly, in 2005 he left his job and broke off all contacts with the scientific community... And not only that – he

stopped leaving his apartment, communicating only by phone or through the door. He consistently rejects all job offers and awards (including the Millennium Award worth one million dollars!).

Each of these gentlemen (except Perelman) lived at the turn of the 20th and 19th centuries. Each of them can be used in the scenario – either as a living and active NPC, as a dead source of knowledge (in the form of unpublished notes containing mythical secrets), or as a background reference („Don't think about it, Professor X conducted research in this direction... and how did he end up?).

Humans lik ants, ants like zombies

Fans and authors of cosmic horror like to repeat that people are to gods like ants to humans. So maybe we can go deeper into the ant analogy...

While "true" telepathy is still a matter of speculation, it is a fact that some forms of "mind control" exist in nature. An example is the fungus *Ophiocordyceps unilateralis*. The spores attack the ant. As the fungus grows, it changes the way it responds to pheromones. The infected victim leaves the anthill, climbs a tree and, at a certain height, sticks its mandibles into a leaf and dies. The fungus grows into the ant's body and grows a stalk from the back of its head, which bursts and spreads the spores. The spores are carried on the wind and infect other ants.

I like to say that "a true god is more of a phenomenon than a being" - and *Ophiocordyceps* is a great starting point for creating such a god, after transferring this mechanism from ants to humans. Moreover, in the first stage the contagion may manifest itself in religious euphoria - not that the mushroom cares about being worshiped by humans (it is not even conscious in the human sense), but this is how the human brain interprets the sense of "higher purpose" it instills in it mushroom. Cultists may interpret final death as a transition to a higher state of existence and union with the deity, and may assist in the expansion of holy influence - e.g. by helping confreres in the final stage find a place where their death will lead to the maximum number of contagions, or e.g. spores and pouring them into drinking water sources.

Of course, *Ophiocordyceps* and its possible "followers" may work best in the scenario as a threat that the player characters must face.

Halny and other foehn winds - the whisper of the wind brings madness

Halny is the name of the wind blowing in the Western Carpathians - in southern Poland, Slovakia and northern Hungary. It is a warm, dry and gusty wind that blows towards the valleys. Sometimes it causes significant damage: it tears off roofs and destroys forests (creating windfalls). It occurs mainly in autumn and early spring. Sometimes it causes a flood if the snow evaporates slowly when it melts rapidly. In autumn, it accelerates the ripening of seeds and cereals. It leads to losses in the tree stand. However, the strangest phenomenon is its effect on living beings. Due to rapid changes in air pressure, some people become depressed, others become irritable, and the number of suicides, fights and murders increases. Animals also behave strangely. It all sounds like a superstition of hot-headed highlanders trying to justify their actions... But it's not a superstition. This is a scientifically confirmed fact (here is an example of scientific work proving that halny actually causes an increased number of suicides: <https://ruj.uj.edu.pl/server/api/core/bitstreams/af94dcb4-c29a-46ce-841d-ca80a2c47980/content>). Halny is not the only wind of this type (so-called "foehn"). Other examples include Raco blowing in Chile or the Israeli Sharav.

Of course, the real impact of foehns on humans' well-being and behavior is quite limited, like increasing the number of suicides by 10%, not some apocalypse. Nevertheless... the wind that induces living creatures to (self-)aggression fits very nicely into cosmic horror. Just strengthen it a bit. Let's say the player characters are in an area that is affected by foehn winds. Maybe they just live here, or maybe they are meteorologists or psychiatrists studying this phenomenon. When the season starts, the foehn blows and typical incidents occur... But as time goes on, they become more and more intense, starting to exceed the usual norms. Local authorities are trying to implement countermeasures, but the situation is getting more and more out of control. Is foehn simply an amazing natural phenomenon (something like Color from the Space), which this year, due to some additional circumstances, has taken on a particularly strong form... Or maybe it is the "breath" of some Great Ancient One who has been dozing so far, but is starting to wake up from sleep?

There is more to dimensions than dimensional shamblers

So, three dimensions. We all know them. The basic directions in which we can move are up/down, left/right, and forward/backward. In the universe observable by a human sense and mind, movement in any direction can be expressed in terms of just these three.

A line has only one dimension. A surface has two dimensions. Space in which humans live, has three dimensions. Sometimes time is considered the 4th dimension.

But modern science wonders, if there are more dimensions – 10 or 11 total. We cannot observe them empirically, but there are theories like superstring theory or supergravity theory, which concludes that existence of those additional dimensions is necessary for to unify the four fundamental forces.

What would be practical consequence of the existence of the higher dimensions? The analogy of two-dimensional space is usually used to explain it. Imagine beings living in two dimensions. From their point of view, the universe is a flat plane, on which one can move only lengthwise and widthwise. Movement up and down is impossible for them, objects located above or below the plane are not observable, in fact, the very concept of up and down is incomprehensible to their minds.

Now let's assume that a human, a four-dimensional being, is next to a plane that is the whole world for two-dimensional beings. As long as he is not touching the plane, its inhabitants are not able to observe it at all. He can interact with the plane by touching it. For example, if he presses the tip of his finger against it, then the inhabitants will see a pink circle - the part of the skin directly touching the plane. If the human lifts his finger, the pink circle disappears - from the point of view of the plane's inhabitants, it will disappear into nothingness, because they are not able to observe anything that is above the plane.

And if a human decides, for example, to touch the plane simultaneously with the tips of each of the fingers, then the inhabitants of the plane will observe five independent pink circles - they will not be able to tell at first glance that they are parts of the same being, because the hand - the connection between the fingers - is located above the plane, i.e. in a dimension that they are unable to observe in any way.

Now imagine that a human catches one of the inhabitants, lifts him up, and then sets him down in another place on the plane. From the point of view of his compatriots, it will be teleportation - their compatriot disappeared and then reappeared in another place. From the point of view of the poor kidnapped guy... it's hard to describe. His mind will not be able to comprehend what happened to him, because he has no conceptual apparatus at all to understand the concept of being lifted up. Probably the closest possible description from his point of view will be "two pink circles grabbed me, then moved me to a plane different from ours (i.e. another universe), then to another, then another, and so on... and then they started moving me back through universes until I ended up in

ours again, only in a different place."

Now let us translate this analogy to the interaction of a three-dimensional human and a four-dimensional being. A human will not be able to perceive a being until it enters into direct interaction with human's three-dimensional space. And it is likely that most of these beings will never enter into such an interaction - they may not even be aware of the existence of the three-dimensional world, which, after all, occupies only a tiny fragment of their four-dimensional universe. And even if they do enter into such an interaction, three-dimensional humans will only be able to perceive a tiny fragment of these beings, which does not provide knowledge of their true essence. They will also not be able to understand the way these beings think, because it will be based on concepts that do not exist from a human point of view - just as a two-dimensional being is unable to understand up and down. It is also possible that humans will mistakenly perceive different parts of the same being as separate entities. And each of them will have "magical" powers - it will be able to disappear and appear at will, and also change shapes.

Thus, it is enough for a being to be four-dimensional, for it to be an incomprehensible eldritch abomination, whose existence and behavior defy all known laws, from the perspective of a three-dimensional human. Moreover, the fact that the space available to humans is only a tiny fragment of a larger reality fits perfectly into Lovecraftian cosmicism and the insignificance of humans. Humans, who are not only unable to comprehend most of the real universe, but also to observe it in any way. And yet this real universe probably has more than four dimensions...

ABRAHAMICAL BELIEFS

And so the controversy begins. However, if, like the Loner of Providence, you do not feel a devout respect for the Judeo-Christian Holy Scripture, please continue.

Covenant with the God and Melchizedek

Chapter 14-15 of the Book of Genesis. Ah, Abraham's Covenant with God, the act that underlies the three great monotheistic religions. We heard a lot about it during catechesis classes... But what did its conclusion actually look like? Well, Abraham (Abram at that time) defeated his enemies in battle. Then a certain Melchizedek, „King of Salem” and „priest of the Most High God” came to meet him (interestingly, the name „El-Elyon” is translated here as „the Most High God”, which does not correspond to the most frequently used biblical terms for the One Righteous God). , such as Yahweh or Elohim).

This Melchizedek is one of the most mysterious biblical characters. This is what Paul of Tarsus writes about him in the Letter to the Hebrews: „Without father, without mother, without genealogy, he has neither beginning of days nor end of life; but being made like the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.” He was later worshiped by the Melchizedekite sect as a kind of „messiah”, destined to return at the end of time, and one of the Jewish manuscripts from Qmran refers to him as „El” and „Elohim”, i.e.... God. Back to the story. Melchizedek would pronounce a blessing, and Abram made an offering to Melchizedek – a tithe of the spoils. Shortly thereafter, the Lord spoke to Abram, promising him His protection and a generous reward. Part of the reward was the promise of many offspring, which surprised Abram as he was already an old man, but the Lord said it was no problem. The time has come to make a covenant. According to the Lord's command, Abraham killed the animals, cut them in half and spread them on their sides, creating a „road” between the bloody carcasses. And what next? Lest anyone accuse me of lying, I quote literally: „And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him,,

Abram heard the voice of the Lord, announcing that Abram's offspring would one day go to Egypt, where they would remain in captivity. That's right, Egyptian slavery was pre-planned by God, so much for free will. And then: „And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.” (pieces of the slaughtered animals). For me, the horror potential is obvious.

How to use it specifically? Perhaps Melchizedek was one of the Faces of Nyarlathothep? Perhaps Abraham and his offspring were to play some role in his plans? As I mentioned, Abraham immediately received a prophecy that his descendants would go to Egypt, moreover, the Melchizedekite sect supposedly mixed biblical beliefs with Egyptian ones, and as we know, Egypt is a region of particular interest to the Black Pharaoh. Or maybe the Shifting Chaos wanted to lay the foundations for the Abrahamic religions from the beginning, as part of a millennia-long plot/joke? Maybe the Melchizedekite cult still exists, and referring to a figure present in mainstream religions helps it gain acceptance and hide the darker elements of their doctrine and practice? Or maybe Melchizedek was just an ordinary human sorcerer and players will discover his secrets, including the summoning ritual Abraham used? Or maybe the discovery of the dark roots of the Abrahamic religions will simply become a shocking trauma for the characters following one of them?

Succubi/incubi, aliens and the sorcerer-pope

Ah, succubi, the object of nerds' erotic fantasies. Their male counterpart, the incubus, is somehow less popular. However, few people delve into the details of beliefs about these creatures, and some rather dirty details can be found there... Today's pop culture generally assumes that the purpose of succubi is to suck out the victim's life energy during the sexual act. Yes, this thread appears in the original medieval beliefs... but it is not primary. The main goal of succubi and incubi (apart from spreading the sin of impurity, of course) is... reproduction. Well, demons, like angels, are incapable of sexual reproduction... at least among themselves. But the devil's insidiousness knows no limits, so they found a loophole by inventing a rather complicated process in which both succubi and incubi play a role.

Version one - first, a succubus seduces a man, taking his semen during intercourse and transforming it into demonic semen. Then he "passes" them to an incubus who, using this perverted sperm, impregnates human women.

Version two - the process is similar, except that the succubus does not pass on the sperm to the incubus. A succubus/incubus are two forms of the same hermaphroditic creature. The same succubus, after accepting semen from a human man, changes its sex (such things are possible in the fiction) and form to, as an incubus, impregnate a mortal woman with the same semen that it previously accepted into its corporeal shell from a mortal.

The children resulting from this process (called "cambions") were not "full" demons, but people who were particularly susceptible to the devil and often had special powers (interestingly, according to some versions of the Arthurian legend, the cambion was Merlin).

These beliefs may be combined with, or treated as a completely separate concept from, the Nephilim described elsewhere.

So, we have inhuman beings that breed with humans for some reason - a typically Lovecraftian plot (the best, but not the only, example being the Deep Ones). Furthermore, given what their reproductive cycle looks like, clearly their biology is bizarre from a human perspective - another Eldritch element.

Interestingly, some people have noticed the similarity of medieval stories about succubi with modern UFO stories. Many people claim that they were abducted by UFOs at night from their bedrooms and that they were subjected to sexual experiments (installing implants on the genitals and anus, taking genetic material, etc.). Of course, the most likely explanation is that both phenomena are caused by the same psychological phenomena, which the human imagination and subconscious give different forms depending on which fantasies are more fashionable (contemporaries are more inclined to believe in aliens than in demons). In turn, some Christian activists claim that the succubus stories were true and that UFOs are simply a new form taken by insidious demons to deceive humanity using newfangled New Age beliefs.

And of course we will rather go the latter way ;) Some inhuman beings have been using humans as breeders for centuries. They used to use illusion or real shapeshifting (connection with shoggoths?) to obtain genetic material from humans through sexual intercourse, but over the centuries their knowledge of humans has developed enough to conduct the process in more laboratory conditions. What is their motivation? Maybe producing half-human hybrids to infiltrate human societies. Or maybe for some reason these beings have become sterile (they have come into contact with dangerous cosmic energies, they have excessively mutated their bodies on the way to genetic perfection, maybe they come from another dimension, and ours is missing some important element

that they needed for procreation) like fallen angels and that is why they need such a complicated process and support from human breeders so as not to become completely extinct?

One of the most famous succubi is Meridiana, allegedly the partner of Pope Sylvester II (real name: Gerbert d'Aurillac). This gentleman was an exceptionally enlightened man and quite nice, especially for a pope. He tried to reform the Church and fought nepotism and simony. He was an outstanding mathematician, popularized the decimal system and Arabic numbers, collected manuscripts (but was more interested in the works of ancient philosophers than Christian theology), constructed many machines, e.g. water-powered organs and clocks, dealt with astronomy and logic, and tried to create a general classification of sciences. All this around 1000 BC. No wonder he was hated by many of his contemporaries for both of these reasons (he even had to temporarily go into exile because of them). Of course, he was credited with dealings with dark powers.

According to the story, young Gerbert obtained his scientific knowledge from a Saracen scholar, who, however, did not want to give him one of the books in his possession (was it the work of another Saracen - Al Azif, aka Necronomicon?). So Gerbert stole the book from his master and ran away with it. He then made contact with a succubus named Meridiana, from whom he obtained further forbidden knowledge... and other benefits. After his death, his opponents claimed that he was torn to pieces by demons (like Abdul Alhazred, apparently some beings do not like it when mortals possess the knowledge described in Al Azif). There is also another legend associated with New Year's Eve. Well, some people believed that the earlier Pope Sylvester I imprisoned the demonic biblical monster Leviathan under Rome. Therefore, when the reign of the sorcerer pope coincided with the millennium year 1000, many believed that "just as the first Sylvester imprisoned Leviathan, the second one would free him, and this would happen exactly in the year 1000 from the birth of Christ." Of course, nothing like that happened - and apparently to commemorate it, we celebrate New Year's Eve on December 31. Did Sylvester II try to free the "Leviathan" and fail? Or did he actually prove to be the protector of humanity and use his dark knowledge to seal him away for centuries to come? And was it this failure/betrayal that caused the foul otherworldly forces to fall? led to his death shortly thereafter? Is there still a copy of Al Azif with Sylvester II's notes in the Vatican that could help summon Meridiana and free/seal the Leviathan, making him an object of desire for cultists and defenders of humanity alike?

Double faith

Double faith is a phenomenon when the same person/group of people de facto professes two religions - usually one openly, the other secretly. It should not be confused with syncretism, when a follower openly mixes elements from different religions. For example, a Roman saying "Zeus and Jupiter are basically the same god, it doesn't matter in which temple I worship him or under what name" is an example of syncretism. However, a man who openly goes to church and sings hymns to the Christian God, and then returns home to secretly worship the old pagan gods of his ancestors, is an example of double faith. As you can easily guess, bifaith occurs most often where monotheistic religions, which do not tolerate competition, begin to dominate, but old beliefs are still alive. A two-liner can sincerely profess both religions, along the lines of "Does the great Lord God really mind if I make an offering to the deity of our river from time to time? But these preachers are pain in the ass..." or he may hate one of the religions and practice it only for show.

It is particularly interesting when there is a specific combination of bi-faith and syncretism, when a believer literally practices both religions at the same time. For example, when saying "Glory to the Lord God and Mary, the Mother of God", he means "Actually, it is glory to the Heavenly God of

Thunder and the Mother Goddess of the Earth." Using the Christian cross, he treats it as a Celtic symbol of the Sun or an Egyptian ankh.

As you can easily guess, such a concept creates great opportunities to introduce Mythical cults pretending to be part of mainstream religions. After all, even the cult of Celestial Wisdom known from the story "The Haunter of Darkness" took on the name of a "church" and made its temple look like a Christian one.

Examples:

- a secluded village where the inhabitants, like villagers in general, are very devout - although their religious practices differ from the orthodox mainstream. At first, only minor differences are visible, which can be put down to local folklore, but as time goes on, the blasphemous nature of the local heresy becomes more and more obvious. Players may appear in the village by accident, or maybe circumstances brought them there? Maybe their friend went missing in the area (was sacrificed) or contact with the Great Old Ones caused phenomena worth investigating? Is the local parish priest also the priest of the cult, or is he the only person in the village who does not realize that his flock are not good Christians at all?

- a contemplative monastery inhabited by monks staying away from the sinful world. Players come here to read a rare book kept in the local library, or to visit a friend who has joined a monastery. The monks are silent (except perhaps for the abbot or a monk delegated to contact with the laity), and much of the monastery - including, oddly enough, the chapel/church - is closed to lay people ("so as not to disturb the atmosphere of contemplation"). Characters familiar with theology or occultism will notice strange symbols woven into the reliefs and sacred images decorating the monastery.

- charismatic Christian group – oooo, charismatic groups are horror material in themselves. Exorcisms, trance techniques, obsession with "spiritual warfare", speaking in languages unknown to humanity, revelations, meeting outside the "main" services, often greater authority of the group leader (often the exorcist) than some bishop or pope... A figure familiar with linguistics may associate that in the case of this particular group, "speaking in tongues" is not typical singing gibberish - it is actually a language, it has a specific structure, but it is not related to any speech known to science.

- a group of genealogy researchers - from what I know, Judaism and Mormonism are faiths that strongly pay attention to lineages, so they may be a good cover for the group of Deep Ones who are actually trying to find lost hybrid lines.

Here are examples of specific doctrines that may be followed by groups of Mythical cultists pretending to be followers of mainstream religions:

- Azathoth is the creator of the universe, incomprehensible, distant. Nyarlathotep is a spawn of Azathoth, and a part of his being that takes human form and communicates with mortals. Yog-Sothoth is often indicated as the supreme being, in seeming contradiction to Azathoth's position, he is omnipresent, pervades everything, is a source of secret knowledge and revelations, and resembles energy rather than being. They are what the group members mean when they say "Glory to the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit!"

- the group has a clear obsession with fire. Jesus and the angels are always depicted as figures in flames. There are quotations referring to fire in sermons, such as Hb 12:29; cf. Deut 4:24; Isaiah 33:14, Deut 4:24, Rev 1:14. They may also quote a fragment from St. Augustine of Hippo "Even the nature of eternal fire is undoubtedly good, although it is intended as a future punishment for the damned. Because isn't a beautiful fire bursting with flame, alive, alert and luminous? (...) It is absurd to praise fire for shining and blame it for burning, because those who do so take into account not the nature of fire, but their own comfort and discomfort: they want to see, they do not want to burn. And they won't think about it, that the same light is so nice to them, sometimes harmful to

sick eyes because it is not suitable for them, and the heat of fire is so unpleasant for them, but for some creatures it is necessary and useful for life because it is suitable for it" or Origen, who wrote about spiritual fire, "does not allow us to have any desire for earthly things and converts us to a different love. Therefore, he who loves these things, even if he has to give up everything, mocks pleasure and fame and even sacrifices life itself; and he does all this with great ease. The heat of this fire, if it penetrates the soul, removes all indolence and makes the one it embraces lighter than a feather." The temple is filled with candles, especially compared to other churches. The community celebrates Holy Saturday (when in the Catholic Church in front of the churches large bonfires are lit with great enthusiasm) and Pentecost (when the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire). In reality, the group worships Cthugha, and his angels (specifically seraphim, whose name comes from the Hebrew "lehisaref", meaning "to burn") are fire vampires.

- the group has another obsession – stars. The temple is decorated with carefully reproduced maps of the night sky, with some celestial bodies marked in a special way - they have no major significance from the point of view of any "normal" religion, but a person familiar with the Mythos may recognize their significance. The group's favorite quotes include: Judges 5:20, Ps 8:3-4, Deuteronomy 1:10, Job 38:31-33, 1 Cor 15:40-41, Mt 2:1-8, Job 38:7, Rev 22:16, Rev 1:16, Dan 12:13, Rev 9:1. The cross is always decorated with additional arms to look like a star. If you prefer, for example, pseudo-Judaism to pseudo-Christianity, fragments of the New Testament fall out of the quotes, and the star cross is replaced with the special devotion to the Star of David. Of course, the group is another variation on the Church of the Starry Wisdom.

- the group's teaching strongly emphasizes the concepts of "transfiguration" and "new birth." There is a concept that people turn into angels after death (which is present in both pop culture and folk Christianity, but is a heresy from the point of view of the teachings of most sects). Favorite quotes are, for example, 1 Jn 3:2, Mt 22:29-33, Mk 12:25, Jn 3, Jn 1:12-13. The group has great respect for the apocryphal Book of Enoch (Enoch is only mentioned in the canonical Bible, but according to extra-biblical beliefs, after his ascension, this patriarch was turned into Metatron, the greatest angel in heaven). They may also repeat a maxim that sounds blasphemous in the ears of modern Christians, but is attributed to various Fathers of the Church, such as St. Athanasius or Irenaeus of Lyons: "God became man so that man might become God." A characteristic feature of this group is that its members, after reaching a certain level of initiation, disappear, which the group can explain in various ways - "he went to preach the Word in distant lands", "devotes himself to prayer in isolation", "left our community and did not we know what happened to him." What really is the "transfiguration" that makes these members disappear? Maybe they are turning into blasphemous monsters kept in the basement of the temple? Maybe their bodies disappear and their minds unite with the deity (or, contrary to the believers' faith, they are also annihilated)? Perhaps they are sacrificed, and the otherworldly beings summoned by this ritual are mistakenly recognized by other worshipers as a new form of sacrificed brothers? Maybe they are simply devoured, with the hope that by uniting with the "angels" they will receive some of their glory?

Stone from the sky, genies and angels

I don't want anyone to point out to me, "OK, you parodied Christianity, but you don't have the balls to write about Islam!" Therefore, it is time to deal with the beliefs of the region from which the creator of the Necronomicon himself came.

Let's start with the Hajar, or Black Stone, the greatest holiness of Islam. The stone has an irregular, oval shape with a polished surface as a result of being touched by millions of pilgrims. The color of

the hajar is described as brownish black or deep reddish brown, and also as blackish brown or reddish black. Some descriptions mention white or yellow crystal-like dots. The inside of the stone is described as gray or "white as milk". Apparently, when it was stolen, it was found to float on water (the stone was later returned). Originally, the stone was supposed to be pure white, but it turned black due to the absorption of sins and the washing away of the sins of the pilgrims who paid homage to it.

According to legend, the forefather Adam received the stone from Allah and built it in the first temple, Al-Kaba, which was destroyed by the flood, and Hajar was lost. Later, Al-Kaaba was rebuilt by Abraham, and the archangel Jibril (Gabriel) brought him a stone to re-build it.

Historians do not know exactly when the Kaaba, within whose walls the Black Stone is located, was actually built. What is certain is that it existed before Muhammad and was dedicated to a polytheistic cult. When Muhammad won the war, he threw away the pagan statues and dedicated the place to Allah, however for some reason he respected the Black Stone and declared it to be a gift from Allah.

Since Hajar has never been subjected to detailed scientific research, it is impossible to say with certainty what it really is. Most scientists accept the thesis of a meteorite or impactite - a fragment of ground transformed as a result of the collision of a meteorite with the earth.

The first association that comes to mind is that Hajar is some kind of "relative" of the Shining Trapezoed. In turn, the impact thesis may be associated with something that was created as a result of the influence of Color Out of Space.

If you are not afraid of blasphemy, you can present Hajar as a psychic source of Islamic religious fervor (of course, this does not have to be the purpose of the Black Stone's existence - simply the mystical fervor is a side effect of its influence on the weak minds of homo sapiens). If you prefer a positive interpretation, shards of the Black Stone can act on Mythical beings like kryptonite on Superman.

Now a little about genies/djinns. This word is associated with a creature that lives in a lamp and fulfills wishes. Meanwhile, few people realize that for Muslims, the existence of djinns is not some folklore or fairy tale, but a dogma of faith. Allah created three kinds of rational beings - humans, djinns and angels. Djinns are a diverse group (e.g. they include the well-known ghouls). Their role can be compared to that of various Western variations on Fair Folk. Centuries ago, the great sage King Solomon decided to deal with particularly mischievous jinns and, using his secret knowledge, in particular a symbol called the Seal of Solomon (similar to the Elder Sign), sealed them in various objects (not necessarily lamps - even in the original story of Aladdin alongside the commonly known the resident of the lamp is also a second djinn, enchanted in a ring), forcing him to fulfill human wishes.

As I have already indicated, Islam distinguishes angels as a category of beings separate from jinn. And their concept is slightly different from the Christian one. First of all, they have no free will or feelings. They are pure intellect, one could say spiritual robots, perfectly obedient to Allah. Hence the dispute in Islamic theology - whether Satan is a fallen angel (can angels fall at all?) or an evil djinn. The concept of invisible and powerful beings devoid of human feelings and sentiments fits perfectly into cosmic horror.

Have you reached the end? Thank you very much! I hope that you liked the text, at least a little, that it interested you or inspired you. If you want, you can support my further creative process. Please:

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